

INTRODUCTION OF THE VOLUNTARY PROTECTION PROGRAM ACT

HON. THOMAS E. PETRI

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 13, 2011

Mr. PETRI. Mr. Speaker, today, Rep. GENE GREEN and I are introducing the bipartisan Voluntary Protection Program, VPP, Act to make permanent one of the Federal Government's most successful workplace health and safety programs. The same legislation is being introduced in the Senate by Sen. MICHAEL B. ENZI, the ranking member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee, and Senator MARY LANDRIEU.

This legislation would codify a successful program, the Voluntary Protection Program, operated by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, OSHA, that recognizes and rewards employers who voluntarily work to improve the health and safety of their work-sites. The program is currently operating but has never been authorized in law and was proposed to be cut by the Obama administration's fiscal year 2011 budget. While the administration backed away from those cuts in its fiscal year 2012 budget proposal, this legislation would put the program on a more solid foundation by specifically authorizing it in law.

Since the VPP was created in 1982, it has grown to include more than 2,200 worksites and more than 921,000 employees. A 2007 report noted that Federal VPP worksites saved the government more than \$59 million by avoiding injuries and that private sector VPP participants saved more than \$300 million. Participating workplaces have an illness and injury rate that, on average, is 50 percent below that of their industry.

Business owners in my district have reported to me that the relationship between OSHA and businesses has become more adversarial over the past couple years. While OSHA does have a responsibility to enforce workplace safety laws, it has been my experience that most employers want to run safe workplaces. The VPP program provides a mechanism for OSHA to build a more constructive relationship with employers who have demonstrated a willingness to invest in workplace safety. This creates an incentive for other employers to follow suit, improving safety and saving money on enforcement costs at the same time.

I hope that our colleagues will join us in authorizing this bipartisan and successful workplace safety program.

IN HONOR OF SERGEANT TIMOTHY LEAHY

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 13, 2011

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Sergeant Timothy Leahy of the Cleveland Police Department, and to celebrate his long career and well-deserved retirement.

Sgt. Leahy served with the Cleveland Police Department for 38 years, rising from the rank

of Patrolman to Sergeant. He was appointed to the force on January 16th, 1973, and has since received many awards and honors for his service. He was voted Legionnaire of the Year by the American Legion 13th District Council and he received the Distinguished Service Award from the Greater Cleveland Police Emerald Society.

The oldest of seven, Sgt. Leahy was born into a line of Cleveland Police Officers including his father, a Lieutenant who served on the force for 43 years, and his Uncle Robert, who retired as a Captain after 37 years of service.

He has been married for 36 years to his wife, Veronica, and has had three children and seven grandchildren, to whom he is known as "Papa." To his friends and family, he is known as an avid golfer and fisherman, and a devoted member of the community.

Sgt. Leahy served as a member of the Cleveland Police Funeral Detail and Ceremonial Unit for 18 years, and has received several Letters of Appreciation for his role in honoring those that have fallen in the line of duty.

He received the James P. Sweeney Founders Award as Retired/Retireable Irish Police Society Man of the Year, the Citizen Award from the Greater Cleveland Safety Forces Holy Name Society, and was awarded the Raymond "RIP" and Mary Reilly Memorial Directors Emeritus Award by the United Irish Societies for work with the St. Patrick's Day Parade Committee.

Mr. Speaker and colleagues, please join me in honoring Sgt. Timothy Leahy as he retires from a long and honorable career of serving the citizens of Cleveland as an enforcer of the laws and protector of the people.

HONORING MARTIN CHASE

HON. THEODORE E. DEUTCH

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 13, 2011

Mr. DEUTCH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a hero from my district whose story I recently became aware of—Martin Chase.

During the war in Vietnam, Martin was a civilian engineer that responded to his country's call to develop more conventional weapons. Our soldiers frequently were pinned down with no way out. To counter this situation, Martin developed a grenade that detonated on impact, giving U.S. troops a more effective means of protecting themselves and fighting the Viet Cong.

When Martin's grenades were shipped to our troops overseas, Martin traveled with them to oversee the training and distribution of these new weapons. Upon arrival, Martin found himself in the middle of the Tet Offensive, and for the next 3 weeks followed our troops through some of the deadliest battles of the war in Vietnam.

However, upon learning that his grenades were distributed to thousands of soldiers to use without training, Martin approached the American commanders, alerting them the grenades could result in countless deaths to American troops. In fact, Martin pointed out that if these new grenades were used without training, there could be more deaths to U.S. troops than enemy Viet Cong deaths. This heroic act of bravery prevented countless, unnecessary deaths of our soldiers.

I am proud to have Marty as a constituent and have enjoyed getting to know him and his story. Martin believed in the power of truth. By confronting the war's needs for results, he saved countless lives. I wish him all the best and thank him for his service and courage during the war in Vietnam.

REINTRODUCTION OF THE SEXUAL ASSAULT FORENSIC EVIDENCE REGISTRY (SAFER) ACT

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 13, 2011

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, today, I am proud to reintroduce important bipartisan legislation, the Sexual Assault Forensic Evidence Registry, SAFER, Act, with my colleagues, Representatives POE, MORAN, COSTA, GRIJALVA, RICHARDSON, GWEN MOORE, BARTLETT, DEUTCH, ADERHOLT, ROONEY, and WASSEMAN SCHULTZ.

I have been working on the issue of DNA technology since 2001 when I, along with former Representative Steve Horn, held a hearing in the Government Reform Committee where we heard from a courageous rape survivor, Debbie Smith. It was for Debbie, and the thousands of rape survivors like her, that I authored "The Debbie Smith Act" to provide federal funding to process the unconscionable backlog of DNA evidence. This legislation passed as part of the Justice for All Act of 2004, authorizing the necessary funding to start processing the backlog through the creation of the Debbie Smith DNA Backlog Grant Program.

Since 2004, millions of dollars in funding have been appropriated under the Debbie Smith DNA Backlog Grant Program. Efforts to eliminate the national backlog of rape evidence samples that have not been tested for DNA have been slowed or stymied by the lack of solid data on the extent and nature of the remaining backlog. While there is extensive evidence that we are making progress towards eliminating the backlog, policy makers lack a reliable estimate of the number of kits awaiting testing, or even how many kits remain at each stage of the process (in police custody, at labs awaiting processing, etc.).

This legislation addresses these issues to reduce rape kit DNA backlogs nationwide by allocating existing program funds for incentives to local jurisdictions to audit rape kits awaiting processing, the hiring and/or training of staff to handle the backlog, and establishing a national database of every individual rape kit result. It also requires the Attorney General to report on best practices for testing and using DNA evidence in criminal investigations of sexual assault.

As Congress considers legislation to amend the Debbie Smith Act or make other changes to DNA testing policy, it is crucial that we first gather reliable, comprehensive backlog data. DNA evidence does not forget and it cannot be intimidated. By processing this evidence, we can prevent rapists from attacking more innocent victims and ensure that the survivors and their families receive justice.